

INCOMING AIRGRAM

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Horstad letter of September 30, 1959 to U.S., British and French Chiefs of Staff stems from efforts of LIVE OAK staff to solve problem of "chain of command" and "single commander" for Berlin Airlift operations. LIVE OAK staff held several extended meetings with representatives three Embassies Bonn in effort to develop coordinated paper. While general agreement reached at staff level, internal complications in Paris prevented circulation of a final LIVE OAK paper which identified and discussed details of problem. The most significant paragraph of the draft staff paper emerged from discussions with three Embassies was:

"DISCUSSION: All of these plans (Civil Airlift, Garrison Airlift, Triple Play and QBAL) are designed for use in a situation in which risk of war had been increased and any airlift operation would increase the possibility of having to put into effect more elaborate military measures. A deficiency common to all plans is the lack of a single authority to insure concerted and coordinated control. The possibility is strong that one plan may have to be phased into another; it is probable that TRIPLE PLAY will have to be executed concurrently with some other air contingency plan. Although TRIPLE PLAY and QBAL provide authority for appointment of a task force commander, neither plan has the task force commander responsible to one authority. It is therefore essential that a centralized coordinating agency be established from the beginning. The LIVE OAK paper on More Elaborate Military Measures has as one of its conclusions that General Horstad should be placed in command of any tripartite air or ground operations. Therefore, it follows that General Horstad is also in the best position to act for the three governments, as the commander to coordinate planning for these airlift operations and to control their initiation. His designation in this respect would be consistent with his other responsibilities in relation to Berlin contingency planning. The exercise of operational control should be delegated to CINCSAFE who would be authorized direct

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communication and coordination with the Allied Ambassadors in Bonn thus enabling them to exercise their special rights and responsibilities in relation to Berlin and Germany as a whole. CINCUSAFE would also be authorized direct communication and coordination with the French and British Commanders in Chief, Germany."

The staff paper then concluded that a "single commander" should "review and coordinate" planning and "exercise operational control" over airlifts when authorized by the three governments with the recommendation that these responsibilities would be delegated to CINCUSAFE.

Since a USAFE officer is Task Force Commander under QBAL, and his relationship with the other forces, the three Embassies and the Federal Republic, are spelled out in the QBAL plan, no difficulties arise out of his receiving authority to act on military matters by delegation from a single commander--provided that authority is not withdrawn, limited, or changed without consent of other parties to the quadripartite plan. It should be noted, however, that under such circumstances the role of a single commander in Paris becomes somewhat ambiguous.

The basic difficulty in trying to define a role for General Norstad in connection with air contingency plans, particularly the Civil Airlift and QBAL, lies in the fact that the concept of these contingency plans, the channels for carrying them out, and their purpose are more political and civil than military. QBAL, for example, involves primarily the supply of the civil population of Berlin by the substitution of air for surface transport, with both British and French planning some use of civil aircraft under contract. Furthermore, civil ministries of the Federal Republic are responsible for providing airports, housing, ground handling, security, and other facilities and services without which no airlift could operate, and only the Federal Republic Government has operational control over these activities. There has been an extremely close and cooperative relationship between the three Air Forces in Germany, the three Embassies and the Federal Republic ministries on all phases of planning as well as between the three Berlin Missions and the Berlin Senat. The channels for these contacts have been REALCOM and RECORD and under QBAL they would remain the policy bodies under operational conditions. Through these committees the Ambassadors exercise their responsibilities for Berlin and coordination with the Federal Republic and the Berlin Senat is achieved.

The airlifts other than QBAL and TRIPLE PLAY are primarily coordinated unilateral plans worked out between the Embassies and the Air Forces to deal with more limited objectives, and are related to the April 4 Berlin Contingency Paper which placed certain responsibilities on the Embassies. Other

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tasks assigned to the Embassies involve the BASC and civil airlines and, while related to the plans discussed above, do not involve direct military action.

On the other hand, it is fully recognized that since airlift conditions could give rise to overt Soviet/DDR actions interrupting airlift operations, LIVE GAK has a role to play in planning more elaborate military measures to maintain air access to Berlin. (See Bonn G-8, July 7, 1959) At that point, combined military action could well call for the single military commander exercising operational control at the Paris level, particularly if such measures were undertaken in connection with other military measures to reopen ground access to Berlin.

We know that the British and French Embassies share in general the views expressed above, and in particular consider it necessary and desirable for General Secrest to be kept fully informed about all planning activities, and to have control of steps which would involve the use of force. At the same time they agree to the single control by USAFE of QBAL airlift operations in Germany and a coordinating agency in Germany for the other plans. All recognize that any decision to activate any one of the airlift plans could only be made at government level and communicated both through military channels to military commands and from Foreign Offices and State Department to Embassies in Bonn. In the case of activation of QBAL, Federal Republic concurrence would be essential and it may should be approached through the Embassies in Bonn.

The Embassy therefore believes that if any designation is made along the lines proposed by CINCEUR, the following points be clearly understood and taken into account.

- 1) The Planning Responsibilities of the Ambassadors in Bonn under April 4 paper.
- 2) The limited military nature of airlifts, both with respect to objectives and operations.
- 3) The special responsibilities of the Ambassadors concerning both Berlin and the Federal Republic.

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- 4) The role of the Federal Republic and the channel of coordination with it through the Ambassadors.

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